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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6502
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RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/EP:MATHUR
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TAGS: [PTER](#) [TBIO](#) [APECO](#) [EAGR](#)
SUBJECT: APEC FOOD DEFENSE PILOT PROJECT: JAPAN

REF: STATE 83232

Sensitive But Unclassified. Please Protect Accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Embassy Tokyo believes Japan is an appropriate candidate for a future APEC food defense pilot project, but GOJ officials may not show much initial interest in sponsoring such an activity.

¶2. (SBU) Based on criteria listed reftel, we rank Japan's suitability high. U.S.-Japan food trade is very large. Japan has both the capacity and level of development to support food defense work, and a strong track record in cooperating with the United States on counter-terrorism issues. Several recent, high-profile food contamination cases have raised Japanese public awareness about food safety issues and, with fairly strict controls on food distribution and production, Japan could provide constructive examples to APEC developing economies. On the other hand, the GOJ was unable to send appropriate officials to a recent G8 Food Defense workshop and there is little priority given domestically to implementing anti-bioterrorism measures.

¶3. (SBU) Econoff raised the food defense issue at an introductory courtesy call with MOFA's Director for APEC Affairs August 6. We noted at that time that food defense is among the USG's APEC counter-terrorism priorities, and the United States is working to identify co-sponsors for future pilot projects in this area.
SCHIEFFER